

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5991

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, NL

SUBJECT: CRISIS AVOIDED AS STATE SECRETARY RESIGNS

REF: THE HAGUE 2593

1. DUTCH CABINET CRISIS WHICH HAD BEEN THREATENING FOR PAST SEVERAL DAYS HAS BEEN AVOIDED AS RESULT OF PRE-DAWN MAY 28 RESIGNATION OF JUSTICE STATE SECRETARY GLASTRA VAN LOON (REFTEL). AFTER SERIES OF LONG MEETINGS BETWEEN PRIMIN DEN UYL, VICE PRIMIN AND JUSTICE MINISTER VAN AGT, GLASTRA VAN LOON, AND OTHERS, STATE SECRETARY AGREED TO LEAVE HIS POSITION IMMEDIATELY, THEREBY EASING IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION OF HAVING TWO TOP OFFICIALS IN MINISTRY IN OPEN CONFLICT WITH EACH OTHER.

2. IN GOING, GLASTRA VAN LOON AND HIS D'66 CABINET COLLEAGUES DID EXTRACT A CONSIDERABLE CONCESSION FROM VAN AGT BY FORCING HIM TO ACCEPT NEW STATE SECRETARY FROM D'66 PARTY, REPORTEDLY SOMEONE WHO WILL FOLLOW POLICIES OF GLASTRA VAN LOON, AND WHO WILL CONTINUE HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR DUTCH PRISON SYSTEM. THE NEW MAN HAS NOT YET BEEN NAMED.

3. GLASTRA VAN LOON, A FORMER PROFESSOR OF LAW AT LEIDEN UNIVERSITY AND RECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN
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THE HAGUE WAS THE LAST APPOINTEE TO THE DEN UYL CABINET IN

MAY 1973. HE HAS NOW BECOME THE FIRST TO LEAVE FOR OTHER THAN HEALTH REASONS. PRIOR TO HIS INCLUSION IN THE CABINET, GLASTRA VAN LOON WAS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS ACADEMIC WRITINGS ON THE DUTCH CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM AND ESPECIALLY FOR HIS ADVOCACY FOR DIRECT ELECTION OF THE PRIME MINISTER. HIS IDEAS WERE AMONG THOSE ADOPTED IN 1966 BY A GROUP OF INTELLECTUAL POLITICAL REFORMERS WHICH LED TO THE FOUNDING OF D'66.

4. IT IS DIFFICULT TO JUDGE WHO WON AND WHO LOST IN THIS SKIRMISH BETWEEN VAN AGT AND GLASTRA VAN LOON. VAN AGT DID MANAGE TO FORCE HIS STATE SECRETARY'S RESIGNATION, BUT NOT WITHOUT SWALLOWING SOME BITTER PILLS IN PUBLIC. BESIDES HAVING TO AGREE TO ACCEPT A NEW "GLASTRA VAN LOON" AS STATE SECRETARY, PUBLIC OPINION HAS BEEN WITH GLASTRA VAN LOON AND NOT WITH THE MINISTER. THE STATE SECRETARY'S CRITICISM OF THE PRISON SYSTEM AND THE INTERNAL OPERATIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED AS BEING WELL TAKEN. (70 PERCENT OF THE PRISON PERSONNEL HAVE SIDED WITH THE STATE SECRETARY, AS DID EXECUTIVE BOARD OF LABOR PARTY.) WHILE VAN AGT WAS NOT SUBJECT TO MUCH DIRECT CRITICISM FROM HIS STATE SECRETARY, MORE WAS IMPLIED SINCE HE HAS BEEN AT THE JUSTICE HELM IN THIS CABINET, AND IN THE PREVIOUS ONE AS WELL AND OBVIOUSLY MUST BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR MINISTERIAL MINUSES AS WELL AS PLUSES. IF ANYONE IS THE CLEAR WINNER, IT IS PROBABLY THE PRIMIN FOR AGAIN MANAGING TO HOLD HIS CABINET TOGETHER.
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